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Fort Detrick Engages National Academy of Sciences for Peer Review of Public Health Reports

(Fort Detrick, Md.) – The National Academy of Sciences' Committee on Toxicology (NAS-COT) has been engaged by Fort Detrick to conduct a peer review of key public health reports and studies concerning environmental contamination and remediation efforts at Fort Detrick, Md., and potential public health effects.

“The National Academy of Science’s peer review of the research to date will either confirm prior findings indicating no health risk or identify any gaps we need to address,” said Col. Judith Robinson, commander of the U.S. Army garrison at Fort Detrick. “This review is a manifestation of the Army Community Covenant between Fort Detrick and the City and County of Frederick. We have to be absolutely certain that we are doing everything possible to provide a safe environment for our employees and neighbors.”

Central to NAS-COT’s review are three reports based on independent studies by public health agencies:

- “Evaluation of Drinking Water Well Exposures via Confirmed Off-Site Contamination, Fort Detrick Area B Groundwater, Frederick, Maryland, EPA FACILITY ID: MDD985397249,” by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) Public Health Assessment, published Dec. 9, 2009.
- “Interim Progress Report: Cancer Investigation,” by the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, published October 2010.
- “Final Cancer Investigation Report,” by the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, tentatively scheduled to be published later this year.

NAS-COT’s peer review of the reports will help determine if the studies are scientifically and methodologically rigorous, robust, and sufficient to address concerns about potential illness. If research gaps are apparent, NAS-COT will recommend actions to address them. A final report is expected by the end of September 2011.



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Currently, the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, in collaboration with the Frederick County Health Department, is conducting an analysis of all the available cancer case data in the Maryland Cancer Registry. The objective is “to determine if the rate of all cancers and/or certain types of cancer is higher than expected and what the likelihood is that an increase in cancer rates could be due to something other than chance alone in what is approximately a one-mile radius from Fort Detrick.” The State of Maryland’s data is considered preliminary, but the analysis to date does not provide any findings that indicate elevated cancer rates. The final report is tentatively scheduled to be published later this year.

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For more information, go to www.detrick.army.mil, or contact the Public Affairs Office at (301) 619-2018.